



Homeland Security Grant Awarded to Neshoba County

Funding will allow construction of emergency operations center

Philadelphia, Miss. (June 28, 2012) – A \$976,800 grant has been awarded to Neshoba County to help build an emergency operations center. The grant was presented by the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

The grant is part of a \$200 million federal program being administered by the United States Department of Homeland Security. The program is intended to improve emergency management and preparedness capabilities at the state, local and community levels as part of a comprehensive national emergency management system.

The grant will allow the county to design and build a dedicated EOC that will serve as the primary crisis management facility and designed warning point for the county. The county currently does not have an EOC and operations are spread though several facilities.

The Homeland Security grant will fund approximately 80 percent of a projected \$1.3 million center, with the county providing 20 percent in matching funds. The funding will encompass site work, construction and equipment to ensure continuity of operations and security of the facility during an emergency.

“Homeland Security involves providing first responders and emergency management personnel with the required facilities and equipment to handle a multitude of situations,” said J.W. Ledbetter, Director of the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security. “These funds will provide Neshoba County with a first-rate center with the ultimate goal of protecting its citizens and savings lives.”

Ledbetter said the United States Department of Homeland Security has directed state Homeland Security affiliates to use the funding to enhance existing capabilities

within individual states for responding to acts of domestic and international terrorism, use of weapons of mass destruction and biochemical agents.

“This is a project that we have wanted to move forward on for many years,” said Jeff Mayo, Neshoba County’s EOC coordinator. “This will allow us to provide the jurisdiction with a designated EOC and coordinate emergency services across various agencies and departments for the entire county. The grant will help us substantially as most counties need to have some type of dedicated EOC.”

Mayo said that preliminary site work will begin next week with construction beginning early fall and completion by May 2013.

The grant program is part of a federal plan for ‘All-Hazard’ response planning, beginning at local levels. The aim is to improve response capabilities for catastrophic natural disasters, potential for weapons of mass destruction, acts of terrorism, and chemical/biological/radiological/nuclear/explosive incidents. The initiative also improves local response capabilities for traffic agents, fires and other emergencies.

The Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, a division of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, in fiscal year 2012 will distribute more than \$5.29 million in Homeland Security Grant Program funding in Mississippi for training and equipment.

For more information go to www.homelandsecurity.ms.gov.

####